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Transmitted via Email

July 18, 2007

MINNESOTA BULLETIN NO. 300-7-21

SUBJECT: LTP-EQIP- TECHNICAL SERVICE PROVIDERS (TSPs) WITH EXPIRED CERTIFICATIONS

Purpose. Provide interim guidance on release of EQIP payments when a producer's advisor is no longer a certified TSP.

Expiration Date. December 31, 2007.

The Conservation Programs Manual specifies that producers can not be reimbursed for TSP activities if the TSP was not certified at the time of delivery of services. A number of TSPs working in Minnesota have had their certifications expire. Following is interim guidance on processing EQIP payment requests involving TSPs whose certification has expired.

1. EQIP 590 Financial Assistance (FA) funds:
 - The higher per acre rate of FA Incentive payments associated with use of an NRCS certified, private-sector nutrient specialist (TSP) can be paid if that rate is in the original contract and the TSP's certification was still in place when the 590 was developed for the year in question. Otherwise pay at the lower rate.
2. Technical Assistance (TA) Funds:
 - Dedicated TA funds in EQIP contracts for certified TSP services can be released if the 911, 912 or 913 service was completed while the TSP was still certified.
3. Field offices will inform affected producers that:
 - The producer will receive the lower level of 590 FA payments in subsequent years if a certified private-sector TSP is not used.
 - The producer will not be reimbursed for TA payments by an individual who is or was not a "certified" TSP when the service was performed.
4. The FO will inform affected expired TSPs that their clients with EQIP contracts have been advised to find a certified TSP.
5. Outside these exceptions, NRCS staff are not authorized to release TSP payments to individuals who are not fully certified on TechReg.

NRCS staff can access the TechReg site at <http://techreg.usda.gov/> to determine if an individual is currently certified. Click on “Find a Technical Service Provider” and then Minnesota. This is the site accessible to the public and only contains names of certified TSPs. Contact Jeff St. Ores, State TSP Coordinator, for the status of individuals not appearing on the “certified” list, including the expiration date of individuals’ original certifications.

Contact Tim Koehler, ASTC, for EQIP questions.

/s/

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State Conservationist

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